

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANAMA 01073 01 OF 02 110513Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----066968 110521Z /20

P R 101215Z MAY 78 ZFG
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6143
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USINT BAGHDAD

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAMA 1073

EXDIS
CORRECTED COPY FOR TEXT
E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, XF, BA
ZGBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER ON MIDDLE EAST EVENTS AND TRENDS

REF: (A) STATE 114888 (B) STATE 110082

1. SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER WAS NOT VERY INTERESTED IN
MY BRIEFING ON DAYAN VISIT BUT TOOK OCCASION TO WONDER ALOUD

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ABOUT PRESIDENT'S ABILITY TO ACT IN MIDDLE EAST IN OPPOSITION
TO ISRAELI LOBBY AND ABOUT U.S. POLICY IN WIDER REGION. HE HAD
MET WITH KING KHALID AND PRINCE SULTAN IN GENEVA, ENROUTE HOME
FROM DAKAR, AND SAID HE FELT SAUDIS ARE DEEPLY EMBARRASSED
BY PROPOSED RESTRAINTS ON F-15'S AND BY POLIE IDENTIFICATION
OF OTHER ARABS AS SAUDIS' POTENTIAL ENEMIES. FONMIN SAID
ARAB SUMMIT NOW UNLIKELY BEFORE END OF YEAR AND NOTED IN PASSING

THAT AT DAKAR MEETING EGYPTIANS HAD BEEN MORE ON THE DEFENSIVE THAN EVER BEFORE. END SUMMARY.

2. BRIEFED FOREIGN MINISTER SHAIKH MOHAMMAD BIN MUBARAK MAY 9 ALONG LINES REF (A). FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WAS NOT SURPRISED THAT DAYAN AND BEGIN VISITS HAD NOT PRODUCED RESULTS SINCE BEGIN WILL NOT MOVE ON HIS OWN AND USG STILL HESITATES TO PUT ITS OWN PLAN ON THE TABLE. FONMIN AGREED THAT THE MOST DIFFICULT OF ISSUES ARE NOW BEING DISCUSSED AND THAT SOME OF THE VARIOUS POLITICAL PROCESSES, THOSE IN ISRAEL AND US, ARE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. PROCESSES IN ARAB WORLD, HOWEVER, MOVING THE OTHER WAY AND HE SAID HE FEARS THIS NEGATIVE MOVEMENT IS GAINING MOMENTUM WHILE PROGRESS TOWVRD PEACE HAS BEEN HALTED. SHAIKH MOHAMMAD SAID HE FELT ISRAELIS ARE PLAYING FOR TIME, WAITING FOR SADAT TO BE FORCED -- BY IQAJEL'S OWN INTRANS-IGENCE -- INTO RETRACTING HIS INITIATIVE AFTER WHICH ISRAELIS WILL SAY "WE TOLD YOU SO, ARABS DON'T REALLY WANT PEACE". SHAIKH MOHAMMAD ASKED WHAT WAS BEHIND FELDMAN INTERVIEW IN LONDON SUNDAY TIMES AND ADDED THAT HE FELT IT WAS DISTORTED PICE. I SAID THAT FELDMAN'S PHRASING DID DISTORT USG POSITIONS AND REVIEWED FOR HIM POINTS MADE IN REF (B).

3. SHAIKH MOHAMMAD SAID FELDMAN PIECE ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF POWER OF ISRAELI LOBBY AND WONDERED HOW PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD EVER BE ABLE TO CARRY THROUGH HIS EXCELLENT AND, THUS FAR, STEADFAST MIDDLE EAST POLICIES IN FACE OF LOBBY'S POWER. HE
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SAID HE AND OTHERS WHO UNDERSTAND U.S. POLITICS KNOW THAT SALE OF AIRCRAFT TO SAUDIS AND EGYPTIANS WILL BE A DEFEAT FOR THE LOBBY. ARAB MAN-IN-THE-STREET, HOWEVER, SEES THAT U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS ABLE TO HELP ITS ARAB FRIENDS ONLY AFTER THEY ARE SUBJECTED TO HUMILIATION AND EMBARRASSMENT AT HANDS OF LOBBY WORKING THROUGH THE CONGRESS. AND WHAT ABOUT NEXT TIME? EVEN IF PLANE SALES SQUEAK THROUGH, CAN ARABS RELY ON USG IN THE FUTURE? SHOULD THEY RELY ON USG IF PRICE IS DAYS AND WEEKS OF PUBLIC EMBARRASSMENT?

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4. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE HAD STOPPED IN GENEVA ENROUTE HOME FROM DAKAR TO SEE VACATIONING AMIR. WHILE THERE HE AND AMIR HAD MET WITH KING KHALID AND PRINCE SULTAN. HE SAID HE FELT SAUDIS WERE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT GETTING THE F-15 AIRCRAFT BUT WERE DEEPLY EMBARRASSED AND DISTURBED BY POPULAR REACTION WHICH HE HAD DESCRIBED. THE PROPOSED INFRINGEMENTS ON SAUDI SOVEREIGNTY IN PLACEMENT OF AIRCRAFT, THE RESTRICTIONS ON KINDS OF ARMAMENTS AND, MOST OF ALL, THE PUBLIC IDENTIFICATION BY SOME

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OF OTHER ARABS AS SAUDIS' MOST LIKELY ENEMIES HAVE BCMILIATED SAUDIS AND, THEY FEAR, MADE THEM LOOK FOOLISH IN EYES OF MANY ARABS. AT SAME TIME, SAG IS DOGGEDLY PURSUING RESPONSIBLE COURSE IN OIL MATTERS AND IN POLITICS. BUT THERE MUST SOON BE RETURN, IN TERMS OF A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT AND A U.S. ENERGY POLICY, OR SADAT INITIATIVE WILL COLLAPSE AND PERHAPS TAKE DOWN WITH IT THE SAUDIS' ABILITY TO CONTINUE THEIR PAST POLICIES.

5. TURNING TO EVENTS IN THE WIDER REGION, FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WAS GAINING IMPRESSION THAT ALL U.S. CONGRESS CARES

ABOUT ISRAEL. SOVIET ADVANCES IN THE HORN, THEIR BUILD-UP IN SOUTH YEMEN, A COMMUNIST COUP IN KABUL -- ALL THESE SEEMED THIS WEEK TO BE OF LESS ACCOUNT TO CONGRESS THAN WHETHER ISRAEL GETS FIFTEEN OR TWENTY NEW AIRPLANES. ADMINISTRATION SEEMS TO HAVE TO DEVOTE SO MUCH ENERGY TO IMPLEMENTING ITS SOUND POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST ITSELF THAT GROWING SOVIET ENCIRCLEMENT OF ARABIAN PENINSULA/GULF REGION IS ALL BUT IGNORED. ON TOP OF ALL THESE ALARMING SIGNS ARAB STATES OF THE GULF ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT SERIOUS INTERNAL SITUATION IN IRAN. REGIME THERE SEEMS UNDER ATTACK FROM MORE THAN JUST THE USUAL LEFTISTS AND SO FAR THE SHAH DOES NOT APPEAR TO REALIZE THAT MORE THAN HIS USUAL RESPONSE TO LEFTIST AGITATION IS CALLED FOR.

6. TURNING AGAIN TO ARAB-ISRAEL DISPUTE, SHAIKH MOHAMMAD SAID HE HOPED U.S. WOULD MOVE SOON TO GET PROCESS MOVING PRESENT IMPASSE MAY BE LOGICAL IN TERMS OF THE VERY DIFFICULT ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED BUT LOGIC SELDON GOVERNS EVENTS. ONCE SADAT BEGINS TO BACK AWAY FROM HIS INITIATIVE, WHETHER OPENLY OR NOT, MOVEMENT IN AREA TOWARD ANTI-AMERICANISM AND WARY ACCOMMODATION WITH SOVIETS, AS WELL AS TOWARD WAR, WOULD BE HARD IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO HALT OR REVERSE. GROWING ANTI-BEGIN MOVEMENT IN
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ISRAEL AND INCREASING UNDERSTANDING OF MID EAST AMONG AMERICANS ARE GOOD BUT THERE IS NOT TIME TO WAIT FOR THESE PROCESSES TO PRODUCE RESULTS. USG MUST TAKE THE LEAD AGAIN VERY SOON OR ITS INTERESTS AND ITS FRIENDS IN AREA WILL BE SERIOUSLY ENDANGERED FOR YEARS TO COME.

7. COMMENT. SHAIKH MOHAMMAD DOES UNDERSTAND OUR POLITICS, THOUGH AT THIS TIME I SUSPECT HE SHARES SOME OF THE POPULAR FEELINGS THAT PROCESS THROUGH WHICH SAUDIS WILL GET F-15'S DEMONSTRATES ISRAELI LOBBY'S POWER. HARD TO SAY HOW MUCH OF "HUMILIATION AND EMBARRASSMENT" HE ASCRIBED TO SENIOR SAUDIS IS THEIR OWN AND HOW MUCH OF THIS REFLECTS HIS FEELINGS. AMIR WILL RETURN

FROM GENEVA NEXT WEEK OR SO AND HIS VERSION OF MEETING WITH KING KHALID WILL BE INTERESTING TO HEAR. FOREIGN MINISTER'S PESSIMISTIC FEELINGS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THIS AND NEIGHBORING REGIONS IS WIDELY SHARED HERE AND PROBABLY CURABLE ONLY BY REAL MOVEMENT TOWARD PEACE AND/OR A SOVIET SETBACK, PREFERABLY AT AMERICAN HANDS, IN THE HORN OR SOUTH YEMEN.
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